



**Ophir School District #72**  
45465 Gallatin Road, Gallatin Gateway, Mt. 59730  
406-995-4281 (fax) 406-995-2161

January 22, 2007

Ennis School District #52 Board of Trustees  
PO Box 517  
Ennis, MT 59729

Members of the Board,

We understand there has been some concern on the part of the Ennis School District's administration that the Ophir School Board has plans to annex portions of the Ennis District. Apparently this is in relation to current activities in Big Sky to establish a high school.

In clarification:

1. The Ophir School Board (K-8) is not involved in the effort of a group of parents in Big Sky to establish a high school district here. Our responsibility is to assure quality education for kindergarten through eighth grade.

We do, however, support the idea that Big Sky citizens should have the right to vote on whether a high school district should be established.

2. Expanding District #72 is not, and has not been, an issue for the Ophir School Board. We have not planned or discussed any idea for annexation. The issue has never been brought forward for discussion by members of the Board or by residents of our district or of yours. The Ophir School Board has no plans to discuss or take action to annex additional territory.

The Friends of Big Sky Education (FOBSE) – the group currently seeking an exception to the moratorium on establishing new high school districts – has been very open and public about their rationale.

Parents of high school aged children in Big Sky currently have three options for secondary education. Children can be sent on a daily eighty-mile round trip commute over Highway 191 to Bozeman. If parents have the means they can split up their family for four years. Or they can sell their home and move out of Big Sky. Most don't like any of the options.

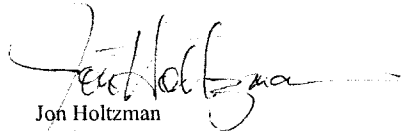
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FOBSE's stated preference is for a locally controlled high school in Big Sky, exactly what you have in Ennis. If that doesn't happen Bozeman's School Board has committed to establishing a satellite facility in Big Sky within five years.

We are in the midst of doubling the size of our facility to meet a rapidly expanding K-8 student population, which has also almost doubled in size during my six years on the Board. We are also trying to understand and anticipate the potential impact of either high school scenario on our district.

We hope this allays any concern you have about our intentions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Holtzman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jon Holtzman  
Chair  
Ophir School Board, District # 72

For the Board: Krista Boersma, Jill Bough, Ben Bulis, and Nettie Quackenbush